

Remarks

Claims 21-28 & 30-31 are at issue. Claims 21-28 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Kay et al (US 5,247,571).

Claim 21 requires that the call be routed over a private line from the SSP of the first carrier to the SSP of the second carrier. Kay et al teaches away from this and states "The prior art does not suggest extending the full range of Centrex type services to groups of lines assigned to business customers with facilities at a number of geographically diverse locations, without resort to private line connection" See Col. 5, lines 54-58. Claim 21 is allowable.

Claims 22, & 24-27 are allowable as being dependent upon an allowable base claim.

Claim 23 requires a private line between the IXC and the virtual private network. Wilkes teaches away from private lines. Kay et al teaches away from this and states "The prior art does not suggest extending the full range of Centrex type services to groups of lines assigned to business customers with facilities at a number of geographically diverse locations, without resort to private line connection" See Col. 5, lines 54-58. Claim 23 is allowable.

Claim 28 as amended requires a private line between the first private virtual network and the intermediate carrier. Kay et al teaches away from this and states "The prior art does not suggest extending the full range of Centrex type services to groups of lines assigned to business customers with facilities at a number of geographically diverse locations, without resort to private line connection" See Col. 5, lines 54-58. Claim 28 is allowable.

Claim 30 requires a private line between the IXC and the virtual private network. Wilkes teaches away from private lines. Kay et al teaches away from this and states "The prior art does not suggest extending the full range of Centrex type services to groups of lines assigned to business customers with facilities at a number of

geographically diverse locations, without resort to private line connection" See Col. 5, lines 54-58. Claim 30 is allowable.

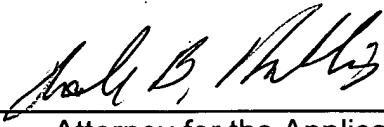
Claim 31 is allowable as being dependent upon an allowable base claim.

The application is now in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

(Madoch et al)

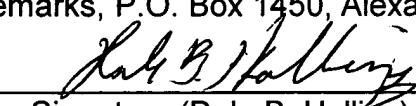
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I hereby certify that a Response is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on:

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Signature (Dale B. Halling)